UNITED
NATIONS

TD

United Nations Conference
on Trade and Development

Distr.
GENERAL

TD/B/CN.2/4
25 January 1993

Original: ENGLISH

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation
First session

PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION [1]

Pursuant to "A New Partnership for Development: The Cartagena Commitment", adopted at the eighth session of the Conference, the Standing Committee, on the basis of Board decision 398 (XXXVIII), which sets out in Annex B the terms of reference of the Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation, agreed on the following work programme:

A. Basic guidelines

1. The primary objective of the Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation is to contribute to national and international efforts to prevent, alleviate and reduce poverty, particularly where it is more acute, and to the formulation of related national and international policies, bearing in mind the diversity of country situations, including the particular problems of the least developed countries and the most vulnerable population groups.

2. To that aim, the Committee will primarily serve as an international forum for exchanging and examining experiences in poverty alleviation, identification of projects and mobilization of resources, both at the national and international levels. It will be action-oriented, that is, it will focus on strategies and policies leading to concrete programmes, with durable results, which are considered to be replicable and multipliable with success. It will be needs-based, that is, it will cater to the evolving diversity of needs of countries by endeavouring to cover the major areas indicated below, and by selecting at each of its sessions a choice of several topics which will be addressed in parallel. Eventually, the Committee's main findings should be followed up in the sequential process presented in paragraphs 49 to 60 of the Cartagena Commitment for implementation.

[1] As adopted by the Standing Committee on 22 January 1993.

GE.93-50078

3. The intergovernmental dialogue would be greatly assisted by the presence of representatives of international organizations and non-governmental organizations engaged in poverty alleviation programmes and experts.

B. Methods of work

4. In addition to setting up the agenda for its next session, at each session the Committee will choose a topic for the exchange of experiences in anti-poverty policies and programmes, to be carried out by a preparatory intergovernmental group of experts which will report to the Standing Committee at its next session. This intergovernmental group of experts should include government policy-makers, experts from international organizations concerned, and NGOs, as well as community representatives dealing with the formulation and appraisal of anti-poverty programmes/projects.

5. The Standing Committee encourages its members and appropriate organizations to facilitate the convening of workshops in developing countries to exchange experiences on anti-poverty policies and programmes, especially on topics relevant to those being discussed by the Standing Committee at its following session. The Standing Committee would welcome receiving the results of these workshops. This exchange should seek to open debate not only on successful policies and programmes but also on those which are acknowledged to have drawbacks and deficiencies.

6. The UNCTAD secretariat is invited to send a questionnaire to the members of the Standing Committee seeking information on: (i) policies and programmes on poverty alleviation which each country is interested in learning about; (ii) policies and programmes which each country is willing to present in detailed terms. The UNCTAD secretariat will present the results of this survey before the second session of the Standing Committee.

C. Areas of the work programme

7. The Standing Committee will carry out work in the following areas:

(1) Review of existing information and analyses on causes of poverty

Analysis of causes and reasons for persistence of poverty.

(2) Programmes and policies

(a) Productive sector programmes:

(i) Access to productive and labour-intensive employment opportunities;

(ii) Access to productive assets (land, capital, technology and infrastructure);

(iii) Programmes supporting productive activities (technical training, pricing policies, the regulatory framework for expanding trade and production activities);

(b) Social programmes:

(i) Access to social services (policy elaboration, service delivery, combination of delivery channels, financing of social services);

(ii) Safety nets (transfer schemes, special problems of countries in transition in this respect, targeting of specific programmes) and social security schemes;

(c) Macro-economic policies and poverty alleviation:

(i) The effects of macro-economic and meso-economic policies (including choice of policy mix for stabilization and budgetary choices) on poverty prevention and reduction;

(ii) The immediate effects on the poor of structural adjustment and interventions aimed at reducing the social costs of adjustment programmes on the poor;

(iii) Global development strategies and paradigms appropriate for poverty prevention, alleviation and reduction;

(iv) Examination of the impact of debt on the dynamics of poverty.

(d) Institutional organization for poverty reduction programmes:

(i) Good management and capacity building (legislative and regulatory framework; planning systems; decentralization);

(ii) People's participation and involvement of the poor in the development process, including women's participation.

(3) Development assistance and poverty

(a) Analysis of experiences on the role, effectiveness and overall impact of international action to combat poverty;

(b) Review of the adequacy (quantitative as well as qualitative) of external financial resources to complement national efforts and identification of major impediments (on both the donors' and recipients' sides) affecting implementation of assistance programmes for poverty alleviation;

(c) Exploration of ways and means of promoting international assistance to the developing countries in their poverty alleviation programmes and projects;

(d) Identification of ways and means for optimizing the respective roles of Governments, donors, international organizations, and NGOs in specific categories of programmes and projects.

(4) International trade and poverty alleviation

(a) Analysis of the effects on incomes, particularly those of the poor, of increased competitiveness of the developing countries and of elimination of trade barriers;

(b) Analysis of the effects on incomes of the poor of diversification of exports of goods and services and of stabilization of export earnings;

(c) Analysis of the effects of external shocks, inter alia, (arbitrary protectionist measures, trade sanctions, sudden falls is commodity prices, etc), on the poor, and propose national and international measures to mitigate their impact;

(d) Analysis of national and international policies and instruments to stimulate exports of labour-intensive goods and services from developing countries as well as the participation of small-scale enterprises in international trade.

(5) Alleviation of poverty and sustainable development

(a) Analysis of the linkages between poverty and sustainable development;

(b) Examination of the implications for the poor of national and international policies relating to environment (e.g., application of the polluter-pays principle; environmental standards that might adversely affect the poor).

(6) Population, migration and poverty alleviation

(a) Analysis of the linkages between migration (internal and international) and poverty;

(b) Examination of the relationship between population growth control programmes and poverty.

D. Technical cooperation

8. The Standing Committee will identify, for consideration, areas in which technical cooperation should be strengthened.

9. The secretariat will provide to countries, at their request, technical assistance within the available resources. In this context, the special situation of the least developed countries will be taken into account.